

Community-Based Job Training Grants

Rend Lake College

Grantee: Rend Lake College

Industry Focus: Energy – Coal Mining, Welding, Industrial Electronics

Key Partners: Man-Tra-Con Corporation; Jefferson County Economic Development Corporation; Perry County Economic Development Corporation; Franklin County Economic Development Corporation; Benton High School; Christopher High School; Hamilton County High School; Pinckneyville High School; Sesser-Valier High School; Franklin County Tech PREP Consortium; Southern Illinois University – Carbondale Coal Extraction and Utilization Resource Center; Bechtel Construction Operations; Peabody Energy; Sugar Camp Energy LLC's Sugar Camp Mine; Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 551; Illinois Board of Electrical Workers; City of Benton; City of Mt. Vernon; City of Sesser; and Illinois Department of Natural Resources - Office of Mines and Minerals

Grant Amount: \$1,622,155

Leveraged Amount: \$1,966,532

Location of Grant Activities: Southern Illinois

Challenge: The energy sector – coal mining, industrial electronics and welding – is experiencing a high-growth period in southern Illinois due to the high cost of imported oil and the national desire to become less dependent upon it. There are a large number of skilled energy workers nearing retirement, and many remaining workers lack training in the latest technology. With new coal mines and power plants on the horizon, there is a need to train thousands of workers in the next five to ten years. Capacity to conduct such training at Rend Lake College has dwindled -- especially in terms of equipment, career advisory services and specialized faculty -- since the closings of many area mines this decade.

Addressing the Challenge: The “Supporting the Revitalization of Southern Illinois Coal as an Energy Source” project will focus on training coal miners, electricians and welders for the energy sector. This project will purchase up-to-date equipment; train new coal miners, welders and electricians; begin dual credit classes in five district high schools; provide career awareness workshops in grade schools; and establish an active advisory committee. Services will be targeted toward middle, high school and college students from all backgrounds, dislocated workers, minorities, and women.

Projected Outcomes:

- Increase current enrollment in welding, coal mining and industrial electrician programs to 420 over a three-year period, from a current baseline of 261 (an increase of 61%)
- 294 (70%) will complete a program over the three-year period
- 235 completers (80%) will enter employment in a related field, with earnings of \$20-23 per hour
- Two additional instructors will be added, focusing on construction-specific welding
- 15 career awareness workshops in grade schools will be provided
- A new dual credit program in mining will serve 50 students at five high schools